

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 010833Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7233

S E C R E T BANGKOK 15747

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH

SUBJ: ROTATION OF US AIR ASSETS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

REF: STATE 215684

1. APPRECIATE REFTTEL. I HAD IN FACT INTERPRETED "INFORM GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND" AS MEANING "CONSULT," AND HAVE PLANNED ACCORDINGLY.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, I MUST REGISTER MY STRONG CONCERN ABOUT THE WAY THIS MATTER HAS BEEN HANDLED. THE WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF "EXECUTE" MESSAGES ON THIS SUBJECT IN VARIOUS DEFENSE CHANNELS ON SEPTEMBER 29 VIRTUALLY ASSURES THAT NEWS OF THE PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL OF ONE F105G SQUADRON FROM THAILAND WILL SPREAD HERE BEFORE WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY OUT ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH THE RTG AND ACHIEVE OUR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. RTG HAS CLAIMED THAT WE DO NOT CONSULT THEM BUT MERELY TELL THEM AFTER THE FACT WHAT WE PLAN TO DO. THE HANDLING OF THIS WITHDRAWAL GIVES SUPPORT TO THESE THAI CONCERNS. WE ARE MOVING IMMEDIATELY TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH KEY THAI LEADERS, BUT THIS IS A RISK WE SHOULD NOT AND NEED NOT RUN.

3. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PLANNED F105G REDEPLOYMENT WILL INCLUDE ROUGHLY 300 PERSONNEL. DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS HAS TOLD ME THAT DOD WOULD LIKE TO MOVE 650 ADDITIONAL SAC PERSONNEL OUT OF UTAPAO. DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS HAS DECIDED

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NOT TO RAISE THIS WITH THE RTG AND WE HAVE AGREED THAT THE

EMBASSY WILL HANDLE IT. THIS WILL GIVE US A TOTAL REDUCTION OF ABOUT 1,000 PERSONNEL.

4. WE ARE SEEKING AN URGENT APPOINTMENT WITH THE THAI SUPREME COMMAND THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER. FOLLOWING THIS WE WILL REPORT THE RTG'S REACTION AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE EXACT TIMING, PRESS HANDLING AND OTHER MODALITIES OF THESE DRAWDOWNS. IN THE MEANTIME, I URGE THAT FURTHER MESSAGE TRAFFIC ON THE SUBJECT BE HANDLED IN THE MOST LIMITED CHANNELS UNTIL WE CARRY OUT OUR LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH THE RTG ON ANY MOVEMENT OF U.S. FORCES TO OR FROM THAILAND.
MASTERS

SECRET

NNN

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